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ABSTRACT

A sample of 24 voluntary participants in a federally funded vocational training and placement program for homeless people in El Paso, Texas, was studied to identify specific interventions that increase self-sufficient behaviors of homeless individuals. Case study data were collected from orientation discussions, career counseling sessions, and ongoing case management interviews. Supplemental information was gathered through academic and vocational standardized tests and questionnaires based on Ajzen's theory of planned behavior, which addresses the relationships among beliefs, attitudes, intentions, and behavior. The sample members had positive attitudes toward self-sufficient behaviors and positive behavioral beliefs about the outcomes of self-sufficient behaviors. Their perceived behavioral control over systemic barriers was realistic. Some factors (employment and housing) influenced sample members' behavior rather than intention. Other external barriers (transportation and child care) were overcome by use of integral program services. Sample members fared poorly in internal resources such as skills, planning capabilities, and knowledge. The lack of significant referents, which had the biggest effect on participants' intention to perform self-sufficient behaviors, was addressed through the following intervention tactics: career counseling, case management, and peer support. (Contains 71 references.) (MN)

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The Effect of Selected Intervention Tactics on Self-Sufficient Behaviors of the Homeless: An Application of the Theory of Planned Behavior

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Notes:

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Abstract

Using Ajzen's theory of planned behavior, behavioral intentions, attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms were assessed for $\underline{n}$ = 24 homeless adults engaging in self-sufficient behaviors (enrolling in vocational training and seeking employment). The sample held positive attitudes toward self-sufficient behaviors and had positive behavioral beliefs about the outcome of such behaviors. Perceived behavioral control over systemic barriers was realistic. Some factors, like employment and housing, influenced behavior, rather than intention. Other external barriers, like transportation and childcare, were overcome by use of integral program services. The sample faired poorly in internal resources such as skills, planning capabilities, and knowledge. The most significant effect on intention to perform self-sufficient behaviors was the absence of significant referents. Intervention tactics of career counseling, case-management, and peer support were used to address this void and change the underlying beliefs that effect intentions and subsequent behaviors.

Homelessness has become a major concern for social service agencies, policy makers, educators, and the public. Clearly, certain kinds of troubles and behavior put people at risk of homelessness, but how these troubles and behaviors do so is not so clear. Snyder and Hombs (1990), for example, reported that some of the most common paths to homelessness were 1) shortage of affordable housing, 2) cumulative effects of cuts in federal spending for social programs, and 3) unemployment. Thus, homelessness is a function of many phenomena. Given that those without a stable and appropriate place to live are in danger of becoming the new alienated unemployable underclass (Fagan 1990), emergence from that state, therefore, must be difficult.

Barriers the Homeless Face

Research by Bassuk (1991) has shown that 'houselessness' is only one aspect of homelessness. In addition to shelter, 'home' also provides a connection to a community of supports, including friends and family. Rossi (1994) suggested that the definition of home evokes a set of closely related concepts like family love, kin support, warmth, intimacy, acceptance, shelter, food, and safety. Therefore, being without a home can also mean a lack of support and appropriate role models (Jefferson County Public Schools District, 1989). The Federal agency of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) acknowledged this, by including in their criteria for being homeless a definition that states homeless persons have 'no resources or support'. Baumohl (1994) goes on to suggest that social isolation is also a relevant issue when considering homelessness. Furthermore, it can be argued that [lack of] support systems can influence decision-making. Krumboltz and Nicholls (1990), for example, contended that a person would tend to prefer one action over another, if a valued friend or relative stressed its advantage to them. Support is particularly crucial for emergence from a homeless state (Dornbusch, 1994). The question arises, therefore, about whether or not the homeless have an adequate support network that could positively influence intentions for self-sufficient behaviors.

Another systemic barrier, as described by the Employment Policy Initiative of the Chicago Institute on Urban Poverty (1993), is that of high levels of unemployment and the failure to create enough jobs in the economy. Clements (1994) found that 41% of respondents to a survey about homelessness, considered that lack of employment opportunities was the number one obstacle to the 'reentry' of the homeless into mainstream society. Further, Marcuse (1990) described how government policy, the profit structure of housing, and the distribution of income through changes in employment patterns, are all related causes of homelessness. Marcuse goes on to suggest that the economy, therefore, not only plays a role in providing opportunities for self-sufficiency through employment, but is also a means of allowing workers to become homeless when they are no longer necessary to the economy. Being in employment, however, does not guarantee against homelessness (Fagan 1990; First, Rife, & Toomey, 1994). Furthermore "... the working poor stand so close to personal disaster that only one unexpected event or delayed income can push them over the brink" (Snyder & Hombs, 1990, p. 19). This precariousness is reflected in a survey by Clements (1994) which reports that 36% of respondents could imagine a situation in which they become homeless.

Housing opportunities is also an area to be noted as a problem for the homeless. Wolch and Dear (1993) contended that the collapse of affordable housing markets have contributed to the crisis of homelessness. The National Coalition for the Homeless supported this assumption and estimated that " ... a shortage of at least 4.2 million low cost rental units exist" (NCH, 1993). Once homeless, many do not have the resources to rehouse themselves (Fagan 1990), especially when non-subsidized housing is beyond the reach of many low to moderate income persons, and public and subsidized housing is in great demand. The need for more low cost housing to be made available is evident (Coates 1990).

Another barrier to the homeless in their attempts at self-sufficiency, can be that of cooperation from others. Lack of cooperation by staff, for example, in social service agencies set up to help the

homeless is a factor identified by the U.S. Government Office of Vocational and Adult Education (1990). Some agency staff have negative perceptions about the homeless and their [lack of] capabilities. For example, 92% of respondents to a national survey overwhelmingly agreed that the homeless are viewed as a public nuisance (PERF, 1993). These respondents were police officers! It leaves little doubt, therefore, about their attitudes towards the homeless. Furthermore, not all socially minded agencies welcome the homeless and either have written or unwritten policies that preclude cooperation (U.S. Government Office of Vocational and Adult Education, 1990). Moreover, homeless advocates themselves bear responsibility for reinforcing distorted viewpoints about the homeless (Blasi, 1994); whilst myths that portray the homeless as "...drunk, stoned, crazy and sick" (Snow, Anderson, & Koegel, 1994) can led to prejudice. Many programs that might be able to assist a homeless person may also have rigid eligibility criteria that reflect lack of cooperation.

Studies have shown that barriers to programs, designed to promote self sufficiency for the homeless, include the very shelters which aim to assist in the process (Employment Policy Initiative of the Chicago Institute on Urban Poverty, 1993). Shelters designed to meet the basic of human needs have increasingly become more institutionalized (Stark, 1994) and can be akin to formal institutions such as prisons; "A total institution may be defined as a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wide society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered way of life" (Goffman, 1961, p. xiii). This definition can be used to describe many emergency shelters which provide '3 hots and a cot' without the support of a social services department to address the myriad of self-sufficiency needs.

In addition to employment, housing, and the implications for opportunities based on shelter life and the cooperation of others, other external barriers exist for the homeless. For example, a report by the Employment Policy Initiative of the Chicago Institute on Urban Poverty (1993) found that inadequate

access to public transport systems was a significant systemic barrier. Bassuk (1991) suggested that another resource, that of childcare, could financially hamper a families capacity to remain housed. Furthermore, once 'unhoused' childcare can become an even greater issue in terms of becoming self-sufficient again. In terms of external barriers, research has shown that transportation and childcare needs are also barriers to self-sufficient behaviors.

The remaining barriers to be addressed in this research are those of internal resources. These include skills, knowledge, and planning capabilities. A report by the Texas Literacy Council cited 20% of the workforce in the state of Texas lacked the skills to function productively (Texas State Literacy Council, 1989). The report goes on to add that new jobs in the future will be primarily high-skilled occupations, and even the older (more traditional) jobs will be reorganized in ways that demand new skills. The need for updating skills and retraining is evident among the homeless. Coates (1990) estimated that only a sixth of today's homeless population are employable by 'normal' standards, and another sixth could possibly be employable 'soon', if given secure shelter, literacy and job skills training. Further, the NCH (1993) has suggested there is a need to educate the labor force because an education can lead to increased employability (even entry level jobs rule out those who have poor functional skills in math and reading).

With reference to planning abilities, research has shown that decision making skills in the homeless can be non-existent, and that "...the inability to make wise choices can create an unstable environment in which lack of housing becomes only one of the conditions" (Jefferson County Public Schools District, 1989, p. 34). This, coupled with lack of knowledge and skills, can be an influence on self-sufficient behaviors.

Whilst the barriers discussed are found in every sector of society, they are reportedly higher among the destitute (Employment Policy Initiative of the Chicago Institute on Urban Poverty, 1993).

Rationale

There has been much research on the numbers and socioeconomic status of the homeless. Snow and Bradford (1994) have suggested that studies either 1) focus on demographics and disabilities, 2) assess the relationship between poverty, unemployment, housing, and so forth, or 3) focus on street life and survival strategies. Little theoretical research has been conducted on the attitudes of the homeless to becoming 'unhomeless'. The purpose of this study, therefore, was twofold. Firstly, it attempted to utilize a theoretical approach to the study of the homeless, rather than another survey on the number or socioeconomic composition of the homeless. In doing so, it introduced the fundamental parts of the theory of planned behavior as a framework for examining and understanding self-sufficient behaviors of homeless people. Secondly, it identified specific interventions that increase the self-sufficient behaviors of homeless individuals engaged in a human development intervention program.

Theoretical Framework

The theory of planned behavior (Ajzen and Madden, 1986; Ajzen, 1987) addresses the relations among beliefs, attitudes, intentions, and ultimately, behavior. The immediate antecedent of any behavior is the intention to perform the behavior; the stronger a person's intention, the more the person is expected to try, and thus the greater likelihood that the behavior will actually be performed. Three conceptually independent determinants of intention have been specified: 1) attitude towards the behavior, 2) subjective norms (perceived pressure to perform or not to perform a given behavior, and 3) perceived behavioral control (a person's belief as to how easy or difficult performance of the behavior is likely to be).

Ajzen (1987) explained that an attitude towards a behavior refers to the favorable or unfavorable evaluation a person has toward a behavior. Underlying an attitude is a set of beliefs termed behavioral beliefs. For example, if a homeless person believes that enrolling in college has a positive outcome such as gaining employment, then they will most likely hold a favorable attitude toward that behavior.

The second determinant of intention is that of subjective norms. This refers to the perceived social pressure on an individual to perform, or not, a specific behavior. Individuals have underlying normative beliefs about whether a specific individual or group of persons think she should or should not perform the behavior. Thus, if an individual believed that enrolling in college was supported by shelter staff then they would be more inclined to do so. Conversely, if the individual held normative beliefs that enrolling in class was disapproved of by shelter staff, it follows that that person would be less likely to perform that behavior.

Perceived control is based on persons' belief about how difficult or easy the performance of a specific behavior is likely to be. An individual considers the presence, or absence, of required resources and opportunities and forms an intention. These factors influencing perceived behavioral control include internal and external factors. Internal factors are skills, abilities, knowledge and planning; while examples of external factors are time, opportunity and the cooperation of others. Ajzen and Madden (1986) offer two versions of the planned behavior theory. One version suggests that perceived behavioral control has motivational implications for intention; the second considers the possibility of a direct link with behavior, regardless of intention. A homeless person, for example, may well believe that they do not possess adequate internal resources, such as skills, for enrollment to college, or the opportunity to do so; this may negatively influence her intention. Alternatively, an individual may have the intention to enroll in college, but their behavior is influenced by their perceived behavioral control over external resources, such a time.

The theory of planned behavior has been used to explain and predict a wide range of behaviors, for example, alcohol usage (Traeen & Nordlund, 1993), leisure activities (Ajzen & Driver, 1992), condom usage (Bowen, 1996; Kashima, Gallois, & McCamish, 1993; Libbus, 1995; Reinecke, Schmidt, & Ajzen, 1996), environmental behaviors (Boldero, 1995; Lynne, Casy, Hodges, & Rahmani, 1995; Sparks & Shepherd, 1992; Taylor & Todd, 1995) driving activities (Parker, Manstead, Stradling, and

Reason, 1992; Parker, Stradling, & Manstead, 1996), smoking behavior (Babrow, Black, & Tiffany, 1990; Black & Babrow, 1991), weight loss (Conner & Norman, 1996; Schifter & Ajzen, 1985), and physical activity (Courneya, 1995; Godin, 1994; Godin, Valois, & Lepage, 1993; Kimiecik, 1992; Theodorakis, 1994). In the education arena, the theory of planned behavior has been used as a framework for curriculum design (Mulvihill, 1996), the assessment of class attendance (Prislin & Kovrlija, 1991), the verification of the underlying causes of students' interest in enrolling in physic classes (Crawley & Black, 1992), and the identification of the determinants that motivate Hispanic students to enroll in chemistry courses (Crawley & Koballa, 1992). In the latter two studies, the authors sought to understand the decision-making processes involved in enrolling in specified skill based training. With such insight, appropriate interventions can be introduced to increase enrollment and alleviate dropout rates.

In human development settings, the theory of planned behavior has been used to understand individuals' motivation to participate in volunteer work (Harrison, 1995) and to examine the mediating effects of job-search self-efficacy, attitude, norms, and intention on job-search behavior (Van Ryn and Vinokur, 1992). In the former study, Harrison (1995) applied the theory of planned behavior to investigate the attendance motivation of $\underline{n} = 53$ male volunteers scheduled to work at a homeless shelter. Harrison reported that of the three determinants of behavior (as posited by the theory of planned behavior), subjective norm and perceived control drove the volunteers' intentions and eventual attendance at a shelter. Consequently, Harrison noted that the shelter administration adopted a program that emphasized social pressure and social support for volunteerism. In the Van Ryn and Vinokur (1992) study, $\underline{n} = 752$ unemployed persons were randomly assigned into an experimental group and $\underline{n} = 370$ formed the control group. The experimental group received interventions, in the form of job-search skills training, support sessions, coping-skills training, and intense empathetic contact with trainers. Data on attitude, intention, and subjective norm toward job seeking were collected from all participants at pretest

and two posttests. Ryn and Vinokur concluded that the theory of planned behavior was a useful framework in determining that, at the 4-month posttest, long-term job-search behavior was mediated through attitude, subjective norm, and behavioral intention. By enhancing these determinants of behavior, Ryn and Vinokur reported that an inoculation against setbacks occurred which was essential for sustaining the long-term behavioral efforts involved in job seeking.

In sum, the theory of planned behavior can be used as a methodology for understanding and predicting behavior based on the beliefs held by the individual. This research used the basic elements of the theory in an effort to increase the understanding of the barriers that face the homeless in their attempts at self-sufficient behaviors.

Methodology

The participants in this 12 month qualitative study in El Paso, Texas, were $\underline{N} = 24$ homeless adults who were voluntary participants in a federally funded vocational training and placement program for the homeless. The goal of this program was to enable homeless participants to successfully complete an appropriate combination of basic skills, GED, and vocational training and subsequently enter unsubsidized employment. Program services included needs assessment, case management, career counseling, personal counseling, basic education skills, general education development, vocational training, job search training, and job search assistance. All costs incurred for these services were met, including tuition, textbooks and supplies, and testing fees. The sample population also had access to additional support services such as payment of childcare expenses, transportation costs, eye examinations and corrective glasses, and the purchase of purchase of tools and uniforms. Program staff could also access a wide range of social services, such as placement into emergency and temporary accommodation, food, clothing, and mental health counseling.

Sample Characteristics

Fifty percent of the sample population were Hispanic, the remainder were 37% Caucasian, and 13% African American. In comparison, El Paso's general homeless population consisted of 66% Hispanic, 26% Caucasian, and 7% African American (El Paso City Council Department of Community and Human Development, 1991). In their 1996 survey of 29 cities, Waxman and Hinderliter reported that the ethnicity of America's homeless was 57% African American, 30% Caucasian, 10% Hispanic, 2% Native American, and 1% Asian. Thus, the study's participants were somewhat typical of the local homeless population, but in comparison of nationwide statistics, Hispanic individuals were over-represented. With regard to gender, $\underline{n}$ = 10 were men and $\underline{n}$ = 14 were women. Twenty-one percent of the sample population were aged between 17 – 25, 58% between 26 – 35, 17% between 36 – 45, and 4% were between 46 – 55. These figures are consistent with national data on homeless persons (see Burt and Cohen, 1987). Sixty-three percent of the sample was single, 29% were single head of households, and 8% represented intact family units. These figures compare to statistics produced by the El Paso Coalition for the Homeless (1994) who cite that 60% of El Paso's homeless were single, 25% were single head of households, and 15% were intact families. Similarly, on a national level, approximately 40% of people who become homeless are families with children (Shinn & Weitzman, 1996). Compared to El Pasoans, the participants had completed higher than average levels of education: two-thirds (n = 16) had completed high school (or an equivalency) versus a little over one third of the local population (El Paso City Council Department of Community and Human Development, 1991).

The median length of time in unemployment among the participants was twenty months, and the median number of jobs held in the last year for previously employed participants was two. Prior to joining the program, the per capita income of the participants was $8,875, some $2,052 less than the local per capita income (which in turn was 65.2% of the Texas per capita figure and 58.48% of the U.S. per

capita income) (figures from the Texas Employment Commission, 1990). The median length of homelessness for women was 48 weeks and 55 weeks for men.

General Procedures

Participants were referred to the program from a variety of social service agencies and on a word-of-mouth basis. The sample was self-selected after having met the criteria of the sponsoring agencies. The three main criteria were 1) aged 22 or over; 2) able to enter unsubsidised employment on completion of training, and 3) were homeless as defined by the Stewart B. McKinney Act of 1994. Thus each participant was an individual who lacked a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and/or had a primary nighttime residency that was a supervised shelter/temporary residence/public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. Upon entering the program, an Individual Service Strategy form was compiled for each participant that detailed the comprehensive package of appropriate services each person would require in order to enter unsubsidised employment and become self-sufficient.

Case study data were primarily collected from orientation discussions, career counseling sessions, and on-going casemanagement interviews. Supplemental information was gathered through questionnaires; and in addition, academic and vocational standardized tests such as Holland's (1985) Self-Directed Search and the Tests of Adult Basic Education (1994). Specific information recorded for this research were those factors relating to the theorized determinants of intention and behavior.

Variables

Variables selected for examination in this study, as specified in the theory of planned behavior, were of two basic types, exogenous and endogenous. Exogenous variables consisted of demographic information, grade level, educational goals, and career goals. Whilst such external variables are deemed inconsequential by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) in terms of their relationship with behavior, they are

consistent with providing contextual information for research studies. Seven endogenous variables were included in this study: attitude toward self-sufficient behaviors and its antecedent beliefs, subjective norm and its antecedent beliefs, perceived behavioral control over resources and its antecedent beliefs, and behavioral intention. The target behavior presented to the participants was that of 'becoming self-sufficient'. This was defined as "...caring for oneself and family in a way that meets basic material and emotional needs, and that provides ongoing personal and economic independence" (Project for Pride in Living, 1992, p. 3).

Results

Attitude Towards Behavior

Given that "... attitudes can not be directly observed, but must be inferred from overt behavior, both verbal and non verbal" (Anastasi, 1988, p. 584) the attitudes of the research sample towards enrolling in training were inferred from responses to questions like: "what do you like/dislike about your life right now?", "how is finishing this training going to help you?". It must be noted that it was not the attitude of the research sample toward training in general that was being examined, but the participants' evaluation of possible behavioral outcomes of enrolling in their own proposed training program. By asking the participants to describe the positive and negative of their present situation; what they would like to change (intention to change); and the benefits these changes might bring, the responses can be seen as an expression of beliefs.

In response to the question "what do you like about your life right now?", $n = 17$ of the sample population indicated that they favorably viewed the concept of returning to education with responses like: "I'm now able to go back to school", "positive things, like school, are happening", "glad to have the chance to continue my education", and "opportunity for achievement and support". Employment issues were most cited ($n = 15$) when asked "what don't you like about your present situation?" (example

responses included "that I'm not self-sufficient", and "that I'm not working"). The remainder of answers were concerned with housing (n = 5) and relationships (n = 4), and thus it is concluded that the sample negatively viewed their current situation.

In response to "how is finishing this training going to help you?", participants were able to express the benefit, if any, of enrolling in a vocational training program. All participants indicated that positive benefits would ensue, example answers included: "able to be more productive", and "be financially secure". It is inferred from such responses that the respondents had favorable beliefs about training, employment, and the outcome of such behaviors.

Subjective Norm

Ajzen and Madden (1986) contended that individuals perceive social pressures to perform, or not, a specific behavior. An individual has normative beliefs; beliefs about whether specific groups or individuals think he or she should do, or not do, a specific behavior. Thus, significant referents are important. Yet, being without a home can mean a lack of support and appropriate role models (Jefferson County Public Schools District, 1989). For the sample population, support network issues were the most common causes of homelessness. Fifty percent indicated that their homelessness was a result of broken relationships: " I left wife and kids", "my mother died", left my husband (abuse)", "my husband threw me out", "my mother threw me out", and "I outstayed my families' welcome after my husband was jailed". As with other findings (Bassuk, 1991; Fagan, 1990), women were twice as likely to be homeless as a result of a breakdown in a relationship than men: 79% of the female population sample were either divorced or separated. Interestingly, Jinxes attributes "... families' growing reluctance to shelter their own down-at-heel kin" as a factor for homelessness (1994, p. 69), a situation echoed by n = 13 who described themselves as being without friends or family.

Those who cited job loss or housing issues (n = 11) as a major contributor for homelessness, also experienced a loss of support. Data gathered through initial interviews showed that extended periods of unemployment, after a job loss, eventually resulted in a move to cheaper accommodations. As the financial situation worsened, another move to a shelter or abandoned house took place. With each subsequent move, the newly homeless distanced themselves from any remaining support systems; "I didn't want my old friends to know I was so hard-up". Nor did moving from location to location lend itself to developing (new) stable support networks. Furthermore, shelters for the homeless contributed to the breakdown of support systems by forcing the separation of family units (see National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 1993).

Given that the sample did not have significant referents whom they consider to have positive opinions about self-sufficient behaviors, two intervention tactics were employed which had a positive impact on the samples subjective norm: casemanagement and peer support. The intensive case-management aspects of the program not only assisted participants in receiving coordinated services from more than one provider (either sequentially or concurrently) in an effective and efficient manner. It also provided the 'constant attention' that people need when they are "... managing the changes they've implemented in their lives" (Project for Pride in Living, Inc., 1992, p. 2). Further, by adopting an outreach role, a commitment and interest in the individual was perceived (Sue & Sue, 1990). Many problems were raised during 'a smoke break', at the training site, that may not have surfaced until a later formal review of their progress, by which time the situation may have worsened. Training issues were addressed immediately; this is especially important after a student has experienced the adrenaline high of initial success and was now finding the training course harder than expected.

Peer support was encouraged in order to influence subjective norms. During the career exploration stage of the enrollment to the program, all participants were introduced to other homeless

students who gave their opinion of furthering their education. This took place either at shelters, outreach centers, or at training sites. Peer support groups were also used in a limited fashion due to the diverse training schedules, campus locations, and the residency of the participants. Students were encouraged to stay, drink coffee and 'chat' with each other on a weekly basis during the issuance of transportation vouchers. Students at the same training site were also asked to gather at formal and informal meetings. These sessions proved useful in highlighting similar concerns and answering questions. Few had the support systems to celebrate successes; for example, one participant experienced ridicule from family members when she proudly informed them about scoring 100% in a recent exam. Much (sincere) work was undertaken in congratulating students for accomplishments; whether this be 'surviving' their first day in college; or taking a final exam. "Giving affirmation for steps taken and goals completed, is a vital part of the encouragement and support necessary to keep participants motivated" (Project for Pride in Living, 1992, p. 7).

Perceived Behavioral Control

Perceived behavioral control is the third determinant of intention. Perceived control is based on an individual' belief about how easy or difficult a certain behavior might be. A person first evaluates the presence, or absence, of the required resources and opportunities, and then makes an assumption on how feasible performing the behavior is. The resources needed for a specific behavior fall into two categories: External and Internal. External resources cover opportunities and the cooperation of others. Internal resources include skills, abilities, and knowledge/planning.

Employment opportunities. One third of the respondents in this research cited job loss as a major contributory factor to their homelessness; making it the second, most commonly cited cause. One participant cited his discharge from the military as the cause for his homelessness; he subsequently experienced continued unemployment as he found himself in competition with the educated (un)employed

for minimum paying jobs. Furthermore, with limited transferable skills, he was unqualified for the profession he wished to pursue. Two 'family unit' participants had income from employment, but were struggling to sustain their living arrangements on their income, and maintain themselves as a unit. A further three single head of households had employment at minimum wage in the service sector and were 'unable to make ends meet'.

Students who attempted to hold a full-time job, in addition to attending school, invariably felt overwhelmed (similar to findings by Astin 1993). One student juggled a full-time job with her Automation Control course. Her schedule was made more hectic when her car was wrecked and she was forced to rely on public transport. This added strain, coupled with the demands of studying and holding a full-time job, were 'too much'; 'something had to give'. In this case, it was her education.

One aspect of the program that proved particularly effective was that of promoting part time employment within the college whilst in training. This helped deal with student retention issues and afford students the opportunity to earn a wage; it may also have had the additional positive effect on growth of job skills (Astin 1993). Four participants were successful in securing part-time employment within the college environment. For example, one student found an intern position in the college library. This proved to be an excellent setting in which to develop her research skills, not only for academic success, but also for her chosen career field of Legal Assistant. As Astin (1993) suggested, working on a campus is positively associated with self-reported cognitive and affective growth. The students ($n = 4$) who worked part time in industry (at minimum wage, service sector jobs), reported that juggling outside work with school sometimes caused conflict. This was consistent with Astin (1993) who reports that holding a part time job off campus, whilst enrolled in college, has almost the same (negative) effects as working full time.

In order to learn the important interpersonal skills that employers look for beyond academic skills (such as job-retention skills/work ethics), volunteer work experience was encouraged. Volunteer work also has positive correlation's with a variety of attitudinal outcomes such as a commitment to developing a meaningful philosophy of life and the promotion of racial understanding (Astin, 1993). The four students who opted to do volunteer clerical work while in the program expressed an 'enrichment' of their lives. Those students who obtained part-time employment (either paid or unpaid) were more likely to enjoy the experience if it was socially useful. This is substantiated by a study by Abbott and Blake (1988) which attributed one of its reasons for success to that of providing part-time employment which 'had meaning'. Students also said they felt more confident about finding full-time employment on completion of their training. This may be considered as a (positive) change in their beliefs about how much control they had over employment prospects.

Housing opportunities. The third most common cause of homelessness was housing related. These housing issues fell into two categories: the termination of opportunity, such as eviction; and the lack of external resources to cover rental costs, utility bills and so forth (the latter was also a function of deficient internal resources). Two of the three individuals who cited eviction as a cause of homelessness were single head of households. One participant was evicted from military housing after her husband was court martialed and jailed in a military security facility. Prior to training, $n = 3$ were living on the streets, $n = 9$ were in emergency shelters, and $n = 12$ were in transitional living centers. At the end of the program, $n = 12$ resided in transitional living centers, $n = 3$ lived in subsidized housing, and $n = 9$ resided in unsubsidized accommodations.

In discussing the opportunity for the homeless to become housed, several factors that influenced perceived behavioral control emerged. Foremost, was the acute housing shortage in El Paso. Despite this, the participants intended to find stable living accommodations, outside the shelter system,

indicating that perceived control about realistic conditions have a direct link with behavior, rather than intention. Enrolling in college courses did improve the accommodation situation for the participants, but this was attributed to an increase in linkages with appropriate agencies as an outcome of case management tactics.

Cooperation of others. Without exception, participants described what they thought the community at large considered homeless persons to be like; a bum, a loser, lazy, unwilling to work, crazy, a drunk, violent, dirty, unemployable. This perception of homelessness pervades all aspects of society and reaction to the homeless ranges from 'appalled and intimidated' (Fagan, 1990), to that of sadness or sympathy (Clements 1994). Perhaps this viewpoint is because most of the visible homeless are also the most dysfunctional and the ones who suffer from chronic illness and lack of adequate resources, or as Snow and Bradford would argue "many behaviors and communications [are] misread as indicative of dysfunction or maladaption when considered apart from life on the street" (1994, p. 467). One participant often dressed in a bizarre fashion, but when her attire was put into context of a street-life without resources, she was comparatively well groomed (see Abbott & Blake, 1988, for discussion about bizarre appearance and its implication for the success of an intervention program). The situation and feelings of the homeless are therefore worsen by the prejudice many have to face. Another participant expressed concern over the stigma he might face as an older student returning to school. Although this might be an issue facing any mature student, in this case it was compounded by his fear that his new classmates might discover he was homeless and react negatively.

In addition to distorted perceptions of the homeless which can led to prejudice and lack of cooperation, many programs that might be able to assist a homeless person, have rigid eligibility criteria. One sponsoring agency for this study required that numerous documents be presented during enrollment (social security card, rent receipts, utility bills, birth certificates, and so forth). Such documentation

requirements excluded homeless persons from accessing training opportunities (documentation was often lost, stolen or absent). An intervention of educating officials on homeless issues resulted in more lenient documentation requirements.

In summary, stereotypical viewpoints, prejudice and unreasonable agency eligibility requirements were the most common examples of lack of cooperation cited by the homeless sample population. These can be argued as contributing factors that lead to homeless persons' belief that there is little, or no, cooperation from others. Without a belief in the cooperation of others, then an intention to perform a specific behavior is less likely to be formed. Many of the homeless expressed surprise over the offer of assistance with their attempts to become self-sufficient. Once they believed that program staff would advocate on their behalf, their intention was more likely to change to that of enrolling in college.

Homeless Shelters and Control. Stark argues that homeless shelters hinder attempts by residents to become 'economically self-sufficient' through mechanisms of control (1994, p. 553). Common to all shelters, used by the homeless in this study, were rules that exert control over the physical and social environment. For example, residents were told when they may shower, eat, watch TV, wash clothes, do chores, when (and what) church to attend, when (and where) to greet visitors, and when to come in – and go out. Shelters also had strict rules governing fraternization. One participant was expelled from a shelter for talking to her partner on shelter grounds. Even parental control was assumed by the shelter. Decisions like when the children went to bed, what, and when they ate, were assumed by complete strangers (shelter staff). Often times, there was a conflict of roles between being the perfect resident (by adhering to shelter rules and regulations), and that of assuming other roles that "...[inhabitants] must fulfill in order to successfully re-enter the socioeconomic mainstream" (Stark, 1994, p. 553). Several students were required as a condition of remaining at a shelter, to undertake chores at a fixed time. These tasks eventually conflicted with scheduled classroom training for one participant;

another was unaware of a temporary employment assignment since the Shelter Night Manager refused to pass on a telephone message during the period after 'lights out'. "Getting, and keeping a job while homeless is extremely difficult and, once there, escaping the Shelters is for many, nearly impossible" (Snyder and Hombs, 1990).

Control in a shelter can also be exerted through fostering dependency and perpetuating a "victim" perception. Even the use of the word 'client' (as defined by Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1990) implies an inability to function without the assistance of a professional. To eliminate homeless persons' reliance on others and 'break the bonds of dependence', the homeless should be given the responsibility for their actions (Crocker, 1990, p. 116). A responsibility often striped in a homeless shelter setting and by overly helpful staff. Shelter residents, in this research, compared shelter life with that of jail; believing they had no control over the conditions of residency. This perceived behavioral control, therefore, has implications for self-sufficient intentions and subsequent behaviors.

Transportation resources. Transportation, as a resource, was a serious consideration for the sample population (especially in a city over 30 miles wide). When discussing "what would make it most difficult for you to return to school right now?", the issue of transportation was cited continuously. N = 6 had access to a vehicle, the remainder relied on public transportation. All participants received financial assistance with transportation costs: 1) bus cards (valid only for journeys to and from school), or 2) gas vouchers (based on miles traveled to school) which were only redeemable at certain gas stations.

Unreliable public transport was an issue. One participant expressed how she disliked being late, even though she would catch buses scheduled to arrive at her destination on time. Another student had to take two buses, with a total one-way journey time of 90 minutes, in order to get to class from the shelter in which she resided. She often arrived at school earlier than necessary to compensate for (any) delays, but her outward journey home was 'a nightmare', often arriving too late to meet her

children from the daycare bus that returned them to the shelter. On these occasions when she was delayed, her sons aged 18 months and five-year-old twins would be returned to the daycare center and she would have to walk three miles to get them. Inevitably, this caused conflict with the daycare administrators whose orders were not to deliver the children unless met by a caregiver. On completion of her training, this student sought professional help for depression prior to successfully securing employment.

Childcare resources. Bassuk (1991) has suggested that childcare, as a resource, can hamper a families capacity to remain housed, and once 'unhoused' childcare can become an even greater barrier to becoming self-sufficient again. It follows, therefore, that childcare was identified by participants as a required resource in order to enroll in education or training opportunities. N = 9 participants (n = 3 participants had temporarily surrendered parental responsibility) had daycare costs met, thus concerns were alleviated and perceived hindrances to training removed.

Skills. Many participants did not consider they had sufficient internal resources, in terms of basic skills, to cope with academic life. Early testing proved to be an essential element in providing the homeless with proof of their capabilities. The mean basic skill level, as measured by the Tests of Adult Basic Education (1994), for reading and math was 8.8, 10.3 (men), and 9.9, 9.9 (women). Although n = 16 had received a High School Diploma or GED, only 41.7% scored in the 12th grade level on the TABE test.

'Lack of career training' or 'lack of skills' were ready comments during the initial counseling sessions. This is of particular note when over half of predicated annual job openings in Texas required six months or more of skills preparation. None of the participants had completed any previous formal vocational training program other than military service (n = 3). Their perceived beliefs about the difficulty of succeeding at skills training were positively changed after receiving career counseling and as

they embarked upon their chosen vocational training programs. N = 5 demonstrated an improved perceived behavioral control over their vocational skills levels by opting to continue their education past the agreed term of their enrollment. They were 'excited' by learning and now realized they 'could do it'. It can be argued that their beliefs about how hard it was to attend college had changed to reflect an intention to remain in school and improve their academic credentials.

Knowledge. Few of the participants knew about the options available to them. Lack of knowledge fell into three broad categories: occupational, educational, and resources. With respect to occupational knowledge, no participant had ever used a careers library (few knew that they even existed). Over half of the participants were unaware of the level of demand for jobs in the field that they were considering, or the job prospects. N = 18 were unclear about the requirements for entry into their chosen profession ("I always worked at labor jobs and I was not aware of what steps to take to get training").

Much of the counseling with participants was educational in nature. All participants were eager to receive instruction on college-related topics: eligibility requirements, types of college level training and certificates/degrees, financial aid availability, etc. Most students had not even seen a college prospectus before or understood "college language". Consequently, all but one of the students enrolled in a non-credit college preparatory course prior to starting their degree coursework.

Participants generally fared better with regard to their knowledge about resources. They were informed about Federal assistance programs and job placement organizations. However, their knowledge of agencies and resources for the homeless was proportional to the length of their own experience of homelessness. One participant knew nothing of emergency shelters (other than the one he was staying at) and had been homeless for 3 1/2 months. Another had been homeless for 'off and on, 10 years' and was considered an expert on homeless issues by her peers. Previous research (Employment Policy Initiative of the Chicago Institute on Urban Poverty, 1993) supports the proposition that the

homeless have a practical knowledge of how the world works. The report, however, goes on to acknowledge that a lack of strong internal resources and a limited sense of possibilities are common barriers to the intention of performing self-sufficient behaviors. In the current research, the interventions of career counseling and educational guidance proved to be an effective tactic in changing beliefs about how difficult performing self-sufficient behaviors might be.

Planning. The sample population acknowledged that "poor planning" was a contributory factor to their homelessness. However, it seems that goal setting in terms of becoming self-sufficient is difficult to do, given the transient nature of homelessness. The homeless "are forced to live in the present, since they must constantly focus upon immediate survival needs. This makes any attempt to plan for the future difficult" (Abbott & Blake, 1988, p. 152). It is this uncertainty that is one of the worse aspects of homelessness (Fagan 1990); an argument agreed with by over half of the population sample.

Participants often struggled to list the steps they needed to take in order to reach their goals and even defining long term goals seemed to be a problem area. It was the role of the counselor to help set measurable and realistic goals with the participant. The incremental steps (and outcomes) towards their self-sufficiency goal were clearly outlined. Steps were listed in a fashion that afforded early success in order to induce retention and create excitement for future learning. Giving affirmation for steps taken and goals completed was a vital part of the encouragement and support that was necessary to keep participants motivated.

Conclusion

This research used the basic elements of the theory of planned behavior in an effort to increase the understanding of the barriers that face the homeless in their attempts at self-sufficient behaviors. The results showed that eliminating barriers would increase self-sufficient behaviors among the homeless. Within the theoretical framework, it is clear that the sample population held positive attitudes toward

self-sufficient behaviors (namely, that of enrolling in college to upgrade/acquire skills), and had positive behavioral beliefs about the outcome of such a behavior. The results also showed that the homeless had negative normative beliefs; they had few referents who were available to express an opinion over a behavior, and even fewer significant others who could express a favorable evaluation about their enrollment in college. The homeless also had poor perceived control over both external and internal resources. Some factors, like employment and housing, influenced behavior, rather than intention. Other external barriers, like transportation and childcare, were overcome by use of integral program services.

Several conclusions can be drawn from this research. First, the belief systems of the homeless tended to interfere with self-sufficient behaviors. Most notably is that of normative beliefs. Secondly, perceived behavioral control is realistic in terms of external resources, but the homeless also had ineffective beliefs in their own skills, knowledge, and planning abilities. And lastly, the intervention tactics of career counseling and case management can be useful tools in 1) changing attitudes and beliefs, 2) providing much needed emotional support, and 3) advocacy to help overcome fears about lack of cooperation. These intervention tactics had a positive effect on intention and behavior.

Interestingly, while the case management attempted to change the perceived behavioral control over external resources, career counseling provided a forum for changing beliefs about internal resources. Krumboltz and Nichols (1990) made a dynamic diagnosis about career decisions, in that they explained choice in term of belief systems. These authors theorized that individuals take action on the basis of their beliefs; and that these beliefs can also interfere with a 'clients' ability to achieve goals (1990, p. 162). Challenging beliefs and attitudes is therefore an important aspect of the counseling process. In this study, career counseling challenged, changed and strengthened beliefs about internal resources, such as skills and knowledge and thus became an unexpected but effective intervention tactic. The role of a careers counselor working with the homeless is essentially twofold. 1) the counselor must have access to a strong

network of informational and support agencies in order to overcome some of the systemic barriers the homeless face. The counselor is then able to perform mediation or advocacy tasks; 2) the counselor should provide feedback about skills, personal competencies and accuracy of personal beliefs, in order to challenge, if necessary, intentions and behaviors.

In sum, the paradigm provided by Ajzen and Madden (1986) and Ajzen (1987) proved to be a useful framework for examining the effectiveness of a human development intervention program. It appears that 'subjected norm' was the determinant of behavior that most affected self-sufficient intentions of the sample. The homeless had few support systems that promoted a belief that others opinion about a specific behavior was positive. With few normative beliefs, and somewhat negative beliefs about control over the required resources, it is not surprising that according to the theory of planned behavior, the homeless are unlikely to follow through on self-sufficient behaviors.

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